



Executive Officer's Statement (VCGCB Update)

December 15, 2005

Government Claims Surcharge Adjustments

Effective August 16, 2004, the department was given the authority to assess a surcharge against a state entity when a claim filed under the government claims program was approved by the Board. The statutory language provides for a surcharge in an amount not to exceed 15% of the approved claim, leaving the department the discretion to set the amount of the surcharge.

We have reviewed the status of the government claims program, including workload projections for the remainder of this fiscal year. Based on these projections, we will adjust the surcharge from 15% to 12% for the 2005/2006 fiscal year. Adjustments will be made to those surcharges previously collected at the rate of 15% during this fiscal year.

The department will be reviewing the government claims program periodically to determine the appropriate amount of the surcharge. The adjustment from 15% to 12% applies for this fiscal year only.

VCGCB Customer Service Initiative

This fall the VCGCB is focusing efforts on improving customer service in all of its programs. The initiative began with customer service surveys sent to claimants in October. It will continue throughout the spring with training and business process improvements in both the Victim Compensation Program and the Government Claims Program. Improved customer service is a major goal of both the VCGCB strategic planning process and the development of the new compensation claims management system.

Secretary Aguiar, State and Consumer Services Agency (SCSA), hosted the second Customer Service Workshop on December 2. Karen McGagin, Executive Officer and Christie Munson, Manager of the Planning and Publications Unit, attended the workshop. All the departments and agencies within SCSA had an opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and develop strategies for providing excellent service to Californians.

VCGCB Employees Help Build Strategic Plan

On December 13, the entire VCGCB staff participated in a strategic planning session held at the Employment Development Department Auditorium. Richard Mallory, the Board's consultant from Citygate Associates, presented an overview of the comments from interviews and focus groups he held with employees and stakeholders. The entire staff joined in a wide-ranging discussion that will help build the goals and objectives for the strategic plan.

Victims of Crime Act Appropriations Authorized

On November 22, President George W. Bush signed the 2006 Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The law, which sets funding levels for Department of Justice programs, set the cap on the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund at \$625 million for Fiscal Year 2006. The legislation made a number of small cuts for violence against women grant programs, but increased funding for transitional housing from \$12.5 million to \$15 million.

Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee Meeting

The VCGCB held its quarterly meeting of the Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee at the Sacramento County Juvenile Courthouse on Wednesday, December 7, 2005. Judge Kenneth Peterson, Presiding Judge of the Sacramento County Juvenile Court, hosted the meeting and conducted a tour of the new facility. The 12-member advisory committee is composed of representatives from state agencies and other entities serving victims.

California Victim Witness Coordinating Council Compensation Committee

The Victim Witness Coordinating Council Victim Compensation Committee met on December 6, 2005, at the new Alameda Family Justice Center. The committee, composed of Joint Power County Unit directors and Victim Compensation Program staff, meets regularly to discuss compensation issues. Harold Boscovich, retired director of the Alameda County Victim Assistance Program, gave the committee a tour of the facility, which celebrated its grand opening on August 31, 2005.

VCGCB Updates**New Information Security Officer Joins the VCGCB**

The VCGCB welcomes Gary G. Hummel as our new Information Security Officer (ISO). He will join the Board on December 19 and is currently the ISO at the California Student Aid Commission. He is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional with 20 years of experience in the field of information technology. The ISO will work with Debra Gonzales, the VCGCB Chief Information Officer, to ensure that appropriate security efforts are in place to protect the VCGCB information systems.

Victim Compensation Specialist, Support Staff and Advocate Trainings

In November and December the Policy and Training Unit held two trainings, one for new support staff and one for new Victim Compensation Specialists from county Joint Powers Verification Units. The training sessions included policies, procedures, an overview of the VCGCB, and expectations for customer service.

On November 29, the unit presented training to 17 victim advocates from Napa, Sonoma, Lake, Marin, and Mendocino Counties. The training provided a brief overview of the Victim Compensation Program, basic benefit limits, policy changes, and new legislation.

Outreach Visits to Joint Powers Counties

VCGCB staff visited verification units in victim witness centers located in Placer, Shasta, Sonoma, San Luis Obispo, and Sacramento Counties in November and December.

Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division Activities

Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division staff presented training on restitution issues to probation officers in Riverside County on November 16.

The Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division held a two-day meeting for Criminal Restitution Compact (CRC) representatives on November 30 and December 1. CRC representatives from 19 counties attended the meeting. Each county gave a presentation highlighting their successful approaches to obtaining, monitoring, and modifying restitution orders, as well as the challenges unique to their counties. The meeting provided an opportunity for networking, sharing information, and learning new techniques from colleagues. Following the meeting, CRC representative Ken Ryken, Deputy District Attorney for the Alameda County Restitution Recovery Unit, invited participants to observe the restitution court held every Friday morning in Alameda County.